

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 L-03 H-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 SS-15

NSC-05 SP-02 /069 W

-----161434Z 060064 /46

P R 161224Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9902

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2968

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:IPFOR, PINS, CASC (DARNTON: JOHN), NI

SUJECT: DARNTON EXPLUSION AND AMCIT DETENTION WITHOUT NOTIFICATION  
OR CONSULAR ACCESS.

AF FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM

REF: (A) STATE 55983; (B) LAGOS 2827; (C)ILAGOS 2722;  
(D) LAGOS 252; (E) STATE 48378; (F) STATE 57073.

1. IN SEEKING TO ASSESS SIGNIFICANCE OF RECENT EVENTS HARSHLY  
OUT OF TUNE WITH CURRENT MORE FAVORABLE RABWE OF US/NIGERIAN  
RELATIONS, WE PUT DARNTON EXPLUSION IN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT CATEGORY  
FROM CONTINUED SPORADIC ARRESTS OF AMCITS WITHOUT NOTIFICATION  
OF EMBASSY OR GRANTING OF CONSULAR ACCESS.

(A) DARNTON OUSTER WAS CLEARLY THE RESULT OF CONSIDERED (IF  
ILL-ADVISED) HIGH-LEVEL FMG DECISION ON THE BASIS OF PERCEIVED  
UNDESIRABILITY OF PERMITTING HIS CONTINUED REPORTING ON  
NIGERIA "IN AN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT." WHILE DARNTON EXPULSION  
WAS HANDLED BY NATIONAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION (NSO), THAT  
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ORGANIZATION'S ROLE WAS A PERFUNCTORY ONE, OBVIOUSLY  
ON ORDER FROM ABOVE, AND HIS TREATMENT WAS NOTABLY MORE  
HUMANE THAN THAT NORMALLY METED OUT BY NSO, LIKELY  
REFECTING SOME FMG AWARENESS OF SENSITIVITY OF EXPELLING  
A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESTIGIOUS NEW YORK TIMES.  
DARNTON WAS HANDLED GENERALLY CIVILLY, WAS NOT KEPT LONG  
NOR QUASTIONED EXHAUSTIVELY, WAS ALLOWED TO GO HOME

OVERNIGHT, WAS GRANTED HIS REQUEST TO FLY TO NAIROBI AND WAS PERMITTED TO CHAT WITH EMBASSY OFFICIALS AT AIRPORT WHILE AWAITING HIS FLIGHT.

(B) IN CONTRAST TO THIS, SPORADIC ARRESTS OF MISCELLANEOUS AMCITS, OF WHICH ARRIS IS MOST RECENT EXAMPLE, ARE THE ACTIONS OF THE NSO ACTING ON ITS OWN IN PURSUIT OF GENERAL EXHORTATIONS TO VIGILANCE AGAINST "FOREIGN SPIES AND SABOTEURS." ITS ACTIVITY REFLECTS BOTH INNATE NIGERIAN XENOPHOBIA AND A BUREAUCRATIC DRIVE TO PROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS AS WATCHDOG OF THE FEDERATION. THE NSO IS A LAW UNTO ITSELF, ITS ZEAL IN PURSUING FOREIGN "SPIES" UNTEMPERED BY HIGH AUTHORITY. IT IS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION IN REGARD TO PROMPT NOTIFICATION OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES AND THE GRANTING OF CONSULAR ACCESS, AND IT DOES NOT HESITATE TO HOLD FOREIGNERS INCOMMUNICADO FOR WEEKS WITHOUT CHARGE, WITHOUT NOTIFYING THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND WITHOUT EVEN ADMITTING THE FACT OF DETENTION WHEN FORMALLY ASKED BY MEA.

2. OUR RESPONSE TO THE DARNTON EXPLUSIO WILL BE ALONG LINES REFS. (A) AND (F), PRESENTING THE DECISION AS A REGRETTABLE ONE MORE APT TO DETRACT FROM NIGERIAN IMAGE ABROAD THAN IF DARNTON HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO CONTINUE HIS BALANCED REPORTING ON NIGERIA, WARTS AND ALL.

3. NSO DETENTION OF OTHER AMCITS REPRESENTS MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEM. WE HAVE MADE STRONG DEMARCHES IN INDIVIDUAL CASES  
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WITH LITTLE APPARENT SPECIFIC EFFECT, ALTHOUGH THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED WERE ALL EVENTUALLY RELEASED. ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT NSO DIRECTLY HAVE BEEN ANGRILY REJECTED; MEA HAS SOUGHT TO BE HELPFUL ON OUR BEHALF, BUT IS INQUIRES WITH NSO HAVE BEEN BRUSHED ASIDE OR IGNORED.

(A) CHARGE BROUGHT UP THE GENERAL PROBLEM IN CONVERSATION MARCH 10 WITH CHIEF ADEBO, FORMER NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO UN WHO IS WELL CONNECTED IN FMG. POLCOUNS MET DEFENSIVE REACTION WHEN HE MENTIONED THE MATTER TO ACTING MEAN AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR YERO. CHARGE PLANS TO BRING IT UP WITH AMBASSADOR SENU WHEN THE LATTER COMES FOR DRINKS MARCH 16 AND IN MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER EXTAFF GARBA MARCH 17.

(B) GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE ONLY AN APPROACH AT THE VERY TOP HOLDS ANY REAL CHANCE OF EFFECTING BENEFICIAL CHANGE. DEPARTMENT AND AMBASSADOR EASUM MAY WISH TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE

DESIRABILITY OF HIS BRINGING THE MATTER UP WITH HEAD  
OF STATE OBASANJO (PERHAPS WORKING TO HIM THROUGH GARBA)  
ON AMBASSADOR'S RETURN TO LAGOS. WE HAVE ASSEMBLED A  
ROSTER OF SUCH CASES (10 SINCE APRIL 1976, 4 SINCE  
DECEMBER, EXCLUDING NO -AMERICANS SEIZED ON CHARGES  
OF CIA ESPIONAGE) AND BELIEVE THESE CASES COULD  
USEFULLY DOCUMENT THE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL EFFECT ON  
US/NIGERIAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF  
CONTINUING HARASSMENT AND DETENTION OF US CITIZENS,  
WITHOUT NOTIFICATION, CONSULAR ACCESS OR INFORMATION  
OF ANY SORT, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF INCREASINGLY  
AROUSING CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST AND CONCERN OVER THE  
MATTER (REF.I(E). CROSBY

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## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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